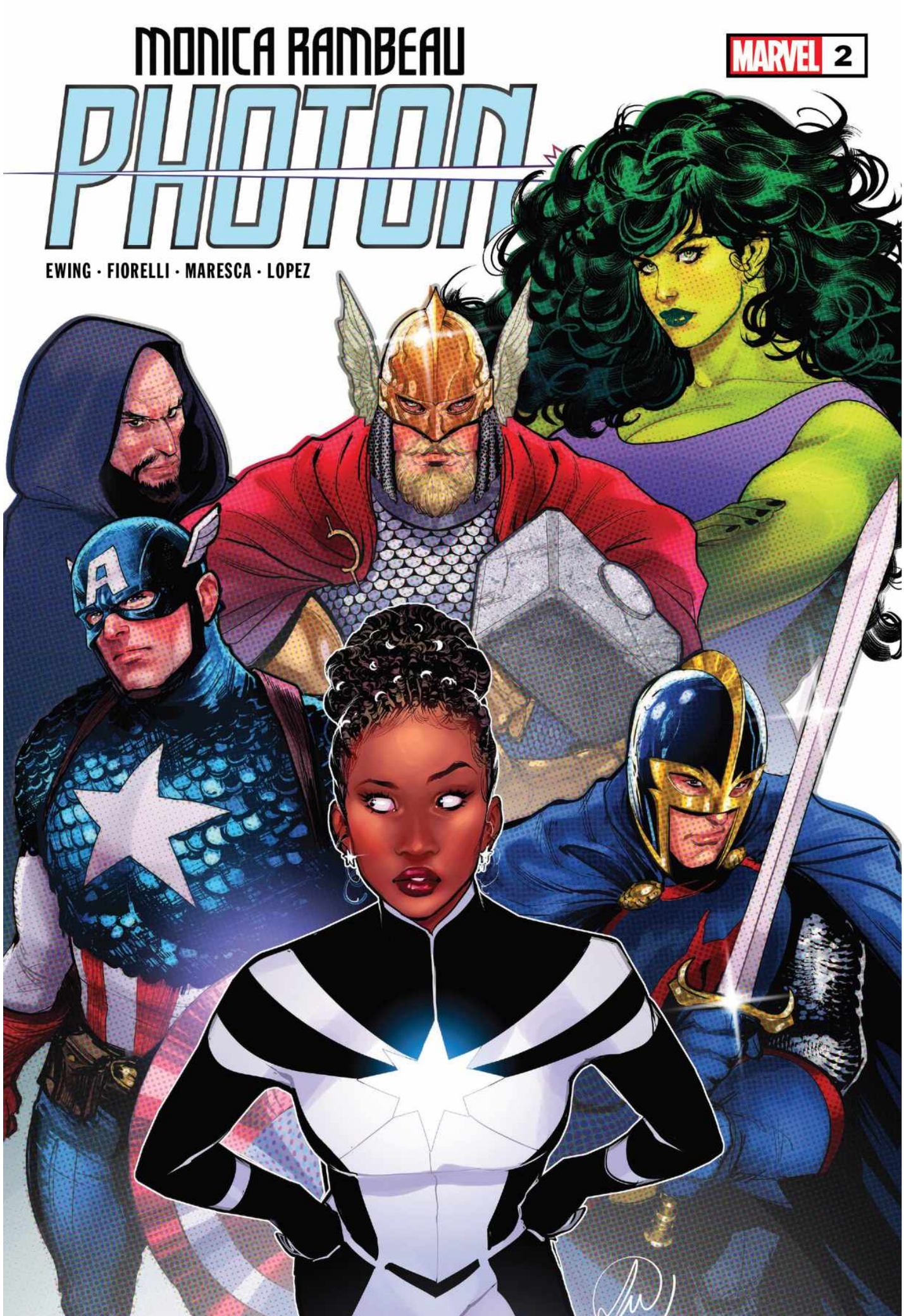
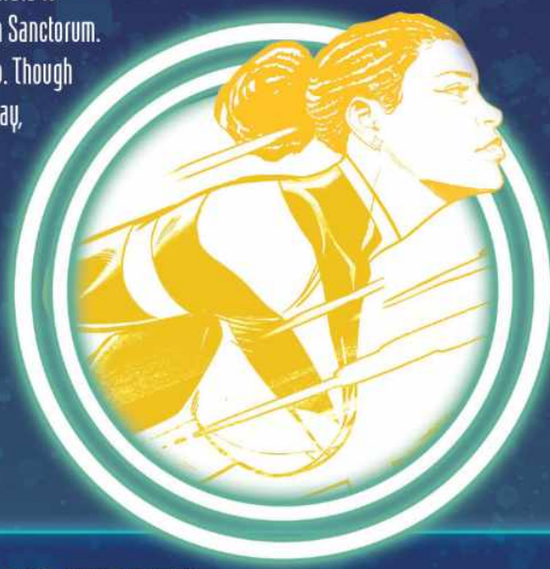

MONICA RAMBEAU
PHOTON
MARVEL 2
EWING · FIORELLI · MARESCA · LOPEZ

When New Orleans Harbor Patrol Lieutenant **Monica Rambeau** destroyed a super-weapon, she gained the ability to convert her body into any form of energy! Inheriting the "**Captain Marvel**" title, Monica has since used her powers to protect others as a member of the **Ultimates**, **Thunderbolts** and even as leader of the mighty **Avengers**. Whatever team she may join or name she may go by, her heroism will never waver--for she is . . .

MONICA RAMBEAU
PHOTON

In the middle of a busy day, **Monica** went to return a mystical artifact called the Stone of Hala to **Doctor Strange**--but no sooner had she arrived than an unusual being attacked the Sanctum Sanctorum. Along with **Spider-Man**, Monica defeated their foe, revealing her to be **Dr. Yesenia Rosario**. Though Spider-Man previously knew Dr. Rosario as a brilliant scientist, she seemed to have gone astray, proclaiming that Monica was going to destroy the universe.

As if that weren't enough, a call from her chaotic cousin and pressure from her (loving!) parents piled on the stress, driving Monica to take a breather in deep space--and deeper and deeper . . . far enough to outrun her worries . . . to just . . . get away from it all . . .



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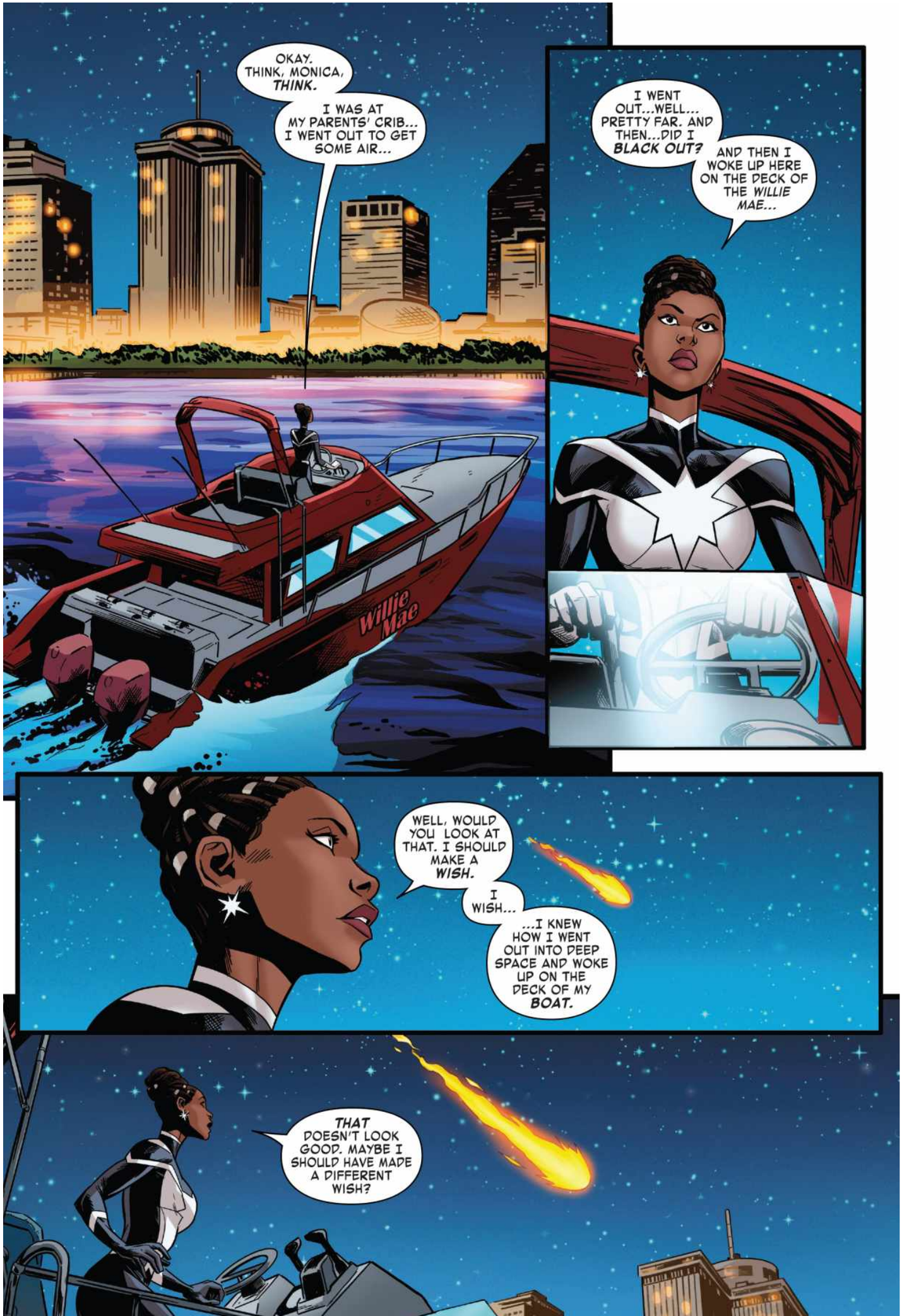
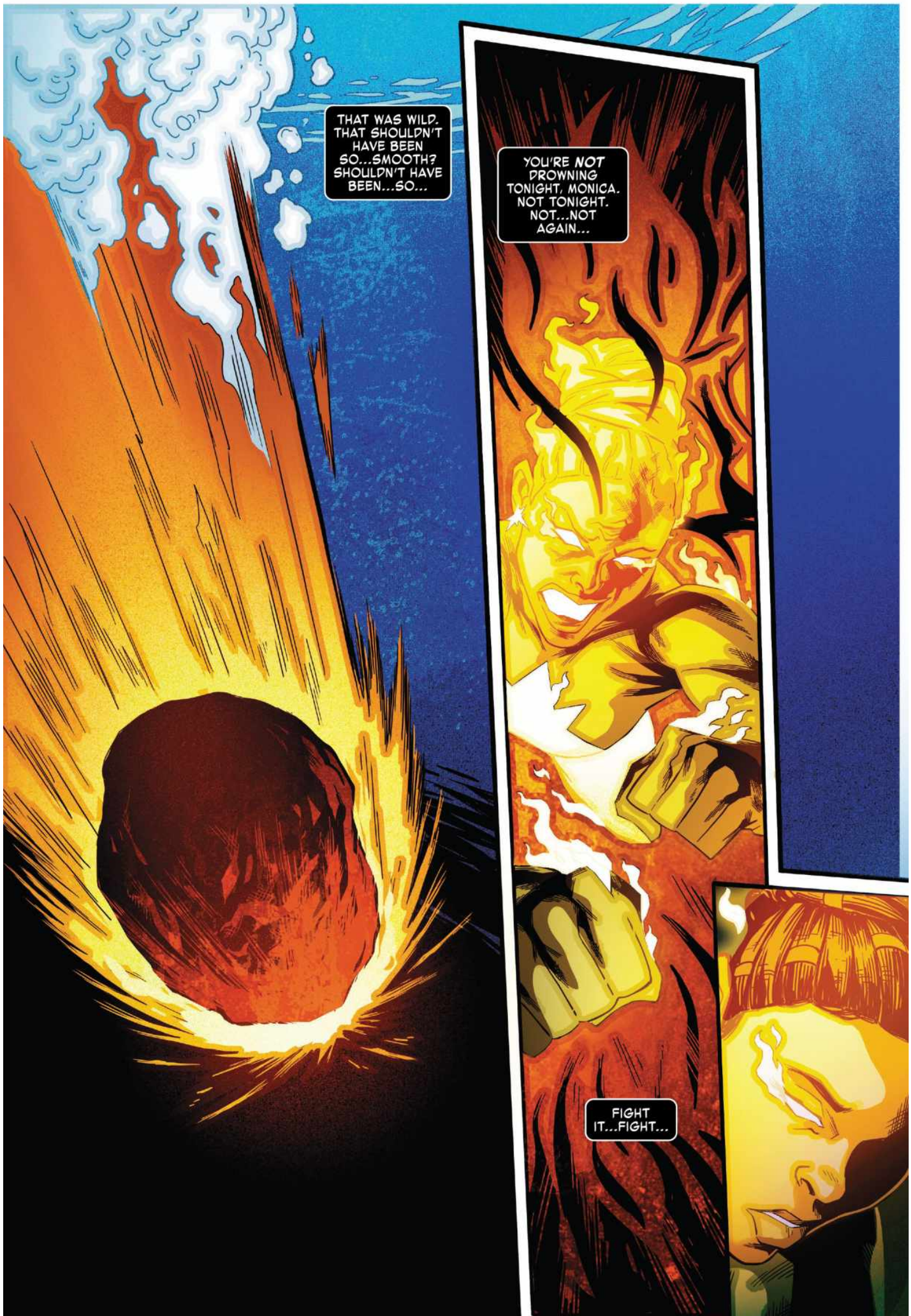
IN LIFE, IF WE'RE LUCKY, WE GET TO KNOW A FEW PLACES WELL ENOUGH THAT THEIR SOUNDSCAPE IS A SIGNATURE. A FINGERPRINT. AN OLD FRIEND.
THIS IS THAT PLACE FOR ME. EVEN BEFORE I TAKE A LOOK AROUND, I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE I AM.
THE WAVES, OF COURSE. AND THE GULLS. BUT IT'S ALSO THE DISTANT RINGING OF BELLS THAT LETS ME KNOW... I'M HOME.
BUT...
...HOW THE HELL DID I GET HERE?


OKAY. THINK, MONICA, THINK.
I WAS AT MY PARENTS' CRIB... I WENT OUT TO GET SOME AIR...
Willie Mae
I WENT OUT...WELL... PRETTY FAR. AND THEN...DID I BLACK OUT?
AND THEN I WOKE UP HERE ON THE DECK OF THE WILLIE MAE...
WELL, WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT. I SHOULD MAKE A WISH.
I WISH...
...I KNEW HOW I WENT OUT INTO DEEP SPACE AND WOKE UP ON THE DECK OF MY BOAT.
THAT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD. MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE MADE A DIFFERENT WISH?

NO REST FOR THE WEARY.
IF I CAN PHASE INTO IT AND THEN RELEASE A TARGETED BURST OF ENERGY, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO BLOW IT INTO PIECES SMALL ENOUGH THAT THEY WON'T DO TOO MUCH DAMAGE.
SHOULD BE LIGHT WORK.
UGH...LIGHT WORK...SPIDER-MAN IS RUBBING OFF ON ME! THANKFULLY, NO ONE WAS AROUND TO HEAR THAT.

IT'S BEEN A MINUTE, BUT I... I KNOW THIS FEELING. THIS... COLD...VOID... TRAPPING ME...SAPPING EVERYTHING OUT OF ME...
AND SOMETHING ELSE TOO. SOMETHING FAMILIAR...OR SOMEONE?
DARKFORCE.
UNNGHH... WHAT THE HELL?! I'M...STUCK? I CAN'T BE STUCK.
FIGHT, MONICA! FIGHT IT! GAH!

SHOOM


THAT WAS WILD. THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO...SMOOTH? SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN...SO...
YOU'RE NOT DROWNING TONIGHT, MONICA. NOT TONIGHT. NOT...NOT AGAIN...
FIGHT IT...FIGHT...

AM I DEAD?
NOT AT ALL, MS. RAMBEAU.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO DROWN YOU. I JUST... I WAS DRAWN TO YOU.
CAN YOU-- CAN YOU HEAR MY THOUGHTS?!
WHO ARE YOU?
OH, ME? WELL, I DON'T HAVE A REAL NAME. NOT ONE THAT YOU WOULD UNDERSTAND. BUT YOU MAY CALL ME...
...THE BEYONDER.

THE BEYOND--
OH, HELL NAW.
NO NEED TO ACT SO RASHLY. DON'T YOU WANT TO GET TO KNOW ME? AFTER ALL, WE'VE ONLY JUST MET.
THAT'S A BUNCH OF &%$#$%&#.
DROP THE ACT. YOU MAY LOOK DIFFERENT, BUT IT'S CLEARLY YOU. NO ONE ELSE WOULD BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO STOP ME IN MY TRACKS.
AND YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO FRONT LIKE I HAVEN'T WASTED COUNTLESS HOURS AND DAYS OF MY LIFE DEALING WITH THE WRECKAGE OF YOUR NONSENSE?*

I ASSURE YOU, MONICA RAMBEAU, I'VE NEVER MET YOU BEFORE TODAY.
BELIEVE ME, I WISH I *HAD.*
YOU'RE PRETTY *INCREDIBLE.*
MAYBE THE MOST INCREDIBLE BEING IN THIS *UNIVERSE,* AS FAR AS I CAN TELL. I HAVE SO, *SO* MUCH TO LEARN FROM YOU.
OH, SORRY. YOU MUST BE *UNCOMFORTABLE,* HM?
THERE YOU GO. *RELAX.* WE HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS. I NEED YOU AT *EASE.*
TAKE A STEP BACK FROM OUR *LEADER,* STRANGER.
WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY?

YOU OKAY, C.M.?
WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR THE SOURCE OF THE WEIRD READINGS WE WERE GETTING AT AVENGERS MANSION.
IT APPEARS THAT THIS "BEYONDER" WAS THE SOURCE!

Y'ALL...
THE AVENGERS TEAM, BUT LOOKIN' LIKE A BLAST FROM THE PAST...
I HIT MY HEAD, AND I'VE TOTALLY *LOST* MY *MARBLES.* OR WENT BACK IN TIME TO WHEN I HAD A HEAD FULL OF *AFRO SHEEN?* OR I DIED IN THAT DAMN METEOR, AND THIS IS...
WELL, I KNOW IT AIN'T *HEAVEN* IF THIS *FOOL* DOCTOR DRUID IS HERE.
YOU OKAY, FEARLESS LEADER?
OH, I'M PEACHY! TRULY. *NEVER* BEEN *BETTER.*
DANE. SURELY *YOU* REMEMBER. I KNOW THEY LOOK DIFFERENT, BUT...THE BEYONDER, THEY CAUSED SO MANY PROBLEMS, THEY HURT SO MANY PEOPLE-- NOTHING? DOESN'T RING A BELL?
OH, I WISH IT DID, CAPTAIN MAR--
AND Y'ALL *KNOW* I AIN'T BEEN *NOBODY'S* "CAPTAIN" FOR A *MINUTE* NOW, RIGHT?! AM I TRIPPIN'?
THIS HAS ALL GOTTEN A BIT *DULL,* HASN'T IT?

WHAT IN THE WORLD--?
I WAS *PULLED* HERE, MY SPIRIT TUGGED ACROSS THE VAST EXPANSE OF SPACE, TO LEARN ABOUT THINGS I DO NOT YET UNDERSTAND.
FIRST, *DESIRE.*
IT'S QUITE ALIEN TO ME. BECAUSE, YOU SEE--
--I CAN MOLD THE FABRIC OF THIS UNIVERSE INTO ANY *FORM* I WISH.
I KNOW *NOTHING* OF UNFULFILLED DESIRE. AND YET IT SEEMS TO BE THE ENGINE THAT DRIVES YOUR WORLD COMPLETELY. YOU ARE ALL BUT A NEST OF ENTANGLED *LONGINGS.*
I WISH I COULD FEEL IT. I WISH I COULD UNDERSTAND.
AND THEN, THE *SECOND* THING. I WAS BECKONED, YOU SEE. BY RAW POWER. SOMETHING ALMOST RIVALING MY OWN.
IMAGINE MY SURPRISE IN DISCOVERING THAT THE ONE WITH THE GREAT POWER WAS *ALSO* ONE ENSHROUDED IN A TREMENDOUS YEARNING. A BEING AT THE NEXUS OF COSMIC ABILITY AND TUMBLING, CACOPHONOUS *WANTS.*
THIS

DO YOU HEAR THAT, AVENGERS? IT SEEMS THAT OUR SUPPOSED LEADER IS IN LEAGUE WITH THIS DISASTROUS INTERLOPER.
PERHAPS WE SHOULD TAKE A VOTE!
TO DETERMINE WHETHER SHE IS REALLY FIT TO--
--L E
A D.

IF SHE IS SERVING AS A *MAGNET* FOR COSMIC BEINGS WITH NEFARIOUS INTENT, SHE IS NOT FIT TO LEAD THE *AVENGERS.*
OKAY, BUT TELL ME WHY YOU'RE SO BUSY *CRITICIZING* ME THAT YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE ARE STANDING AROUND WITH YOUR *MOUTHS* HANGING OPEN WHILE PEOPLE ARE IN DANGER!

THIS IS WHAT THE *BEYONDER* DOES! DON'T YOU REMEMBER?! THEY LOOK DIFFERENT, BUT IT'S THE SAME OLD SONG AND DANCE!
THEY RESHAPE THE WORLD ON A WHIM IN THE MOST SELFISH, SHORTSIGHTED WAY, AND THE REST OF US PAY THE--

--PRICE.
WHAT DID YOU DO TO EVERYONE?!

I COULD TELL YOU WANTED THIS TO BE BETWEEN *ME* AND *YOU.* SO HERE WE ARE.
DON'T WORRY, THEY'RE STILL WHERE *THEY* WERE.

I KNOW WHY YOU'RE HERE. YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE THE WORLD ALWAYS FEELS SO *BROKEN.* AND YOU THINK...IF YOU GIVE EVERYONE EVERYTHING THEY WANT, IF YOU USE EVERYTHING IN YOUR POWER TO GRANT EVERYONE'S LAST WISH, YOU CAN...
...YOU CAN FIX IT. YOU CAN FIX THINGS FOR EVERYBODY AND MAKE A WORLD THAT MAKES *SENSE.*
AND WITHIN THAT, YOU THINK... THERE WILL BE A *PLACE* FOR YOU.
BUT YOU'RE NOT *LIKE* ANYONE ELSE. NOTHING CAN *CHANGE* THAT. SO YOU HAVE TO STOP LOOKING TOWARD THE THINGS *OTHER* PEOPLE HAVE BUILT, TRYING TO FIND VALUE OR MEANING. YOU HAVE TO FIND THOSE THINGS ON YOUR OWN.
AND STOP-- STOP *COMING* HERE, BEYONDER. STAY IN YOUR CORNER OF THE UNIVERSE.
AND PLEASE SEND ME BACK TO MINE.

YOU DONE?
THAT WAS REALLY, LIKE...*AUTHENTIC.* AND VULNERABLE AND WHATNOT. SO THANKS.
BUT FIRST OF ALL--SOUNDS LIKE A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF THE *POT* CALLING THE KETTLE *BLACK.* I'LL LEAVE THAT TO YOU TO WORK OUT THOUGH.
AND SECOND--FOR THE LAST TIME, *I* DID NOT *SEND* YOU ANYWHERE OR TEAR YOU OUT OF YOUR REALITY. NONE OF THAT.
YOU DREW *ME* TO *YOU.* I SWEAR.
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
THAT'S WHAT I WAS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT.
SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR *ENERGY.*
MY *ENERGY?* YOU CAME ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE UNIVERSE TO BE TALKING ALL THAT WOO-WOO STUFF ABOUT ENERGY AND VIBES?
I'M *SERIOUS.* IT FELT LIKE... A WALL WAS BREAKING DOWN.
AH-HA, YOU KNOW I'M TELLING THE *TRUTH!*
NO! I--
YOU DO! I SEE IT!

I SEE IT. IT'S IN YOUR MEMORIES. THAT OLD PROFESSOR SAID IT TO YOU ON THE DAY YOU ACQUIRED YOUR ABILITIES IN THE ENERGY DISRUPTOR EXPLOSION.*
ENERGY IS FLOODING IN FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSE, BREAKING DOWN THE WALL BETWEEN WORLDS.
*WAY BACK IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #16. --E.E.
I SENSED YOU. I WAS DRAWN TO YOU. I WANTED TO UNDERSTAND YOU. BUT I COULD ONLY FEEL YOUR ENERGY BECAUSE SOMETHING BROKE DOWN THAT WALL.
AND IT WASN'T ME, SIS.
THEN WHO...OR WHAT...?
THE STONE OF HALA! WONG SAID IT OPENS PORTALS BETWEEN WORLDS. AND THAT HINGE PERSON WAS TRYING TO STEAL IT! MAYBE THEY GOT TO IT AFTER ALL.
SEEMS AS LIKELY AS ANYTHING ELSE.
TAKE ME BACK TO THE REST OF THE AVENGERS! WE

AH, YOU'VE RETURNED.
WE ASSUMED YOU HAD ABANDONED US IN THIS JUNGLE.
IN YOUR ABSENCE, WE ALL VOTED, AND--
I BET YOU DID.
AS I SAID, IT IS YOUR DESIRES I WISH TO UNDERSTAND...
...IF YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT I DID--HERE, I'LL CHANGE IT BACK.
MONICA, I WANT TO BELIEVE WHAT YOU'RE TELLING US. I JUST THINK WE WOULD REMEMBER FIGHTING AN ALL-POWERFUL BEING.
HM. IF IT IS LACK OF FULFILLMENT THE BEYONDER WISHES TO UNDERSTAND, IT MAKES SENSE THAT MONICA WOULD BE THE ONE AMONG US TO ATTRACT NOTICE.
AFTER ALL, SHE LOST HER PARENTS AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE.
WHAT?! NO. YOU'RE WRONG.
HM. YET ANOTHER DELUSION. WORRYING.
MY PARENTS ARE ALIVE, DRUID. I CAN SHOW YOU!

CARLOS PACHECO
1961-2022

"My friend Carlos Pacheco was a sweetheart of a guy who loved comics, the Marvel comics that he read as a child most of all. He brought an enthusiasm to his work that went beyond the drive of the professional — he was truly invested in the characters and their fictitious lives. His work combined the dynamics of John Byrne with the realism of Neal Adams, creating a synthesis that captured the essence of American super hero comics — a form that was exotic to Carlos as he first read the translated stories but which he absorbed and came to embody like a native. A citizen of Spain, the Marvel Universe was his true home."

— TOM BREVOORT

"Carlos was a dream collaborator who made every story better with his ideas, his brilliant storytelling and his beautiful art. But more, he was warmhearted, enthusiastic and a wonderful person. I was thrilled to work with him but happier still to have him as a friend. He will be enormously missed."

— KURT BUSIEK

FRACTIONS OF A SECOND LATER.
COULD HAVE USED A HEADS-UP, YOU KNOW. SPEED-OF-LIGHT TRAVEL MAKES ME NAUSEOUS.
MY BAD. I JUST NEED TO REAFFIRM MY SANITY. MY PARENTS ARE NOT DEAD. THERE'S JUST NO--
MY LOVE, I WOULD HAVE LIKED A HEADS-UP IF YOU WERE BRINGING FRIENDS FOR DINNER.
I ALWAYS HEAR SO MUCH ABOUT MONICA'S WORK FRIENDS BUT NEVER GET TO MEET Y'ALL.
I'M HER HUSBAND, JERICHO. JERICHO DRUMM.

NEXT

#3

Still searching for answers as to why the universe has gone all topsy-turvy, Monica Rambeau blazes into a forgotten corner of the cosmos. But even as she seeks help to put her friends, family and life right side up again, she encounters a group of

ZONE